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LATIN AMERICA REVIEW

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If Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, the head of Peru's largest political party and a key figure in the military regime's democratization process, is removed from the scene it could also prove fatal to the military's commitment to restore civilian government.

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The recently announced cabinet is only a transitional one that will be largely revamped following municipal elections in June.

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Grenada: The New Jewel Movement

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Leaders of the opposition New Jewel Movement in Grenada staged a so-far successful coup on 13 March, ousting Prime Minister Gairy, who was out of the country. The following article provides some background on the New Jewel Movement.



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The Marxist-oriented New Jewel Movement (NJM) grew from its inception in 1972-73 as a small fringe group to become the leading opposition to former Prime Minister Eric Gairy. Owing in part to its unique position in the eastern Caribbean as a major radical party with voter appeal, it may have received greater attention from Havana than the other small Marxist parties in the area. There is tenuous, fragmentary, and unconfirmed evidence that links with Cuba--advice, possible training and funding--may have been strengthened in the last two years.

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Initially, the New Jewel Movement, led by 34-year-old London-trained lawyer Maurice Bishop, presented only a nuisance value to the government. Its early stress on militant underground activity did not have wide-ranging appeal. It presented an ideological mix of socialism, armed struggle, participatory democracy, and xenophobia. Its early model was Tanzanian "socialism".

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The stress on radicalism and illegal activity, however, gave way--perhaps with Cuban encouragement--to more conventional political action by 1974. The movement tempered its stand on nationalization, for example, by promising proper negotiations and compensations in any such move. It first rejected coalition bids from the more moderate opposition parties, which had demanded that the NJM drop some of its more radical demands. It subsequently forged and led an opposition alliance in the 1976 election, which Prime Minister Gairy only narrowly won. In the 1976 election, as today, the NJM-led opposition had the support of the 18- to 30-year-old group while longtime leader Gairy remained popular among the middle-aged and elderly, especially in rural areas.

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The growing strength of the NJM stemmed from:

- Growing distaste for a decade of Gairy's arbitrary, corrupt, sometimes brutal and possibly mentally unbalanced rule.
- The record of ineffectiveness of the more moderate opposition.
- The NJM's espousal of action-oriented and more radical solutions--especially appealing to the youthful unemployed--whose emigration from economically stagnant Grenada curtailed after independence in 1974. [REDACTED]

Both before and since the 1976 election, the NJM won converts and became organized in the rural areas, making inroads into Gairy's primary base of support. [REDACTED]

In addition to Bishop, whose father was killed during the independence disturbances in 1974, NJM leaders include Bernard Coard, who is recognized as the primary Marxist ideologue in the party; and Kenrick Radix, another young, UK educated lawyer. [REDACTED]

Bishop, like several other NJM leaders, has a middle class background, but is generally regarded as Marxist oriented. He is considered to be the most reasonable among the NJM leaders in his views and outlook. There has been some suspicion in Grenada that he is not in complete control of the NJM, but so far we have seen no reliable evidence that this is true. [REDACTED]

The US Ambassador in Bridgetown has commented that he perceives the New Jewel leaders as being well-educated, violence-prone idealists who, while ideologically committed to Marxism, have not demonstrated particular hostility toward the United States. [REDACTED]

The Cuban Connection

From the outset, the NJM was rumored to have links with Cuba. Funding for its publications, for example, was widely believed to come from Cuba and other foreign countries. As the official leader of the opposition, Bishop visited Cuba in 1977. [REDACTED]

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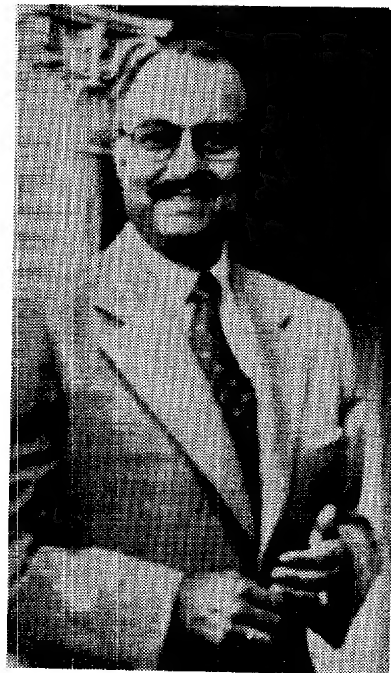
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Nicaragua: Somoza's Reform Proposals

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While continuing to stave off guerrilla attacks, resist international pressures, and wrestle with economic disarray, President Somoza is apparently now moving to undercut his fragmented--yet persistent--political opposition by unilaterally proposing a number of major reforms. Somoza probably hopes that such an apparently sweeping reform package will soothe the political situation and permit economic recovery, as well as win at least a neutral stance from the United States. Opponents of every stripe will doubt the government's sincerity, however, and are not likely to collaborate in the preparation or implementation of any of the reforms. Although Somoza probably intends to step down when his presidential term expires in 1981, he also probably intends to try to handpick his successor and to continue grooming his son for a later time.



President
Anastasio Somoza

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The Proposals

On 2 March, Somoza announced that he would establish commissions to study and prepare new laws aimed at:

- Reorganizing the judicial branch.
- Reorganizing the National Guard.
- Establishing a national police force.

¹This photo taken from AP Wirephoto.

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- "Democratizing" the electoral process.
- Eliminating corruption in government.
- Guaranteeing observance of human rights by government authorities.

3 A committee of four of Somoza's most loyal top officials
2 will coordinate the activities of the six commissions.
4 In addition, Somoza promised to liberalize the radio and
television censorship code, and indicated he would make
some cabinet changes later. [redacted]

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5 Some progress has already been made. The new radio-
television code is before Congress and could be passed
next week. A commission acting under the Ministry of
Government has been working on creating a national police
force separate from the National Guard. Somoza explained,
however, that some of the more complicated reforms could
take up to two years. [redacted]

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The Reaction

1 Somoza indicated that he would like to bring his op-
ponents into the reform process. He can argue that, as
4 an indication of his good faith, the new radio-television
code is a clear improvement over the current law, which
5 the anti-Somoza forces call the "black code." Neverthe-
less, the reaction of the opposition has ranged from dis-
6 interest to distrust, and one newspaper, El Centroamericano,
said the government's proposals simply did not "deserve
any credibility." [redacted]

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7 The Conservatives, the only legal opposition party,
plan to present their own, more far-reaching reform propos-
als to Congress soon--without, however, any expectation
that Somoza's ruling Liberal Party will go along. Instead,
the Conservatives hope by this gesture to demonstrate their
commitment to democratization and to rid themselves of the
"collaborationist" label. This tactic will probably only
foster more charges that they are playing Somoza's game,
1 however, as well as exacerbate the party's own internal
problems, which were reflected in a recent leadership
shakeup. Moreover, such a move by the officially recog-
8 nized branch of the Conservative Party will inhibit any
prospects for reunification with the other three Conserv-
ative factions. [redacted]

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Somoza's Prospects

9 Businessman Alfonso Robelo, perhaps the leading anti-Somoza political figure of the mediation period, believes that barring a National Guard coup, Somoza is now in a position to serve out his term. Robelo, who has had high-level contact with the Sandinista (FSLN) guerrillas, believes they have suffered heavy losses and are tired. He also believes that recent political assassinations and efforts to compound Somoza's economic worries by targeting agricultural facilities and exports have cost the FSLN some public support. [REDACTED]

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/ The high level of violence, however, shows no signs of abating. It is unlikely that the FSLN is capable of crippling the cotton and coffee harvests, but the continuation of attacks like those last week on three cotton gins will reduce vital foreign exchange earnings and worsen the already bleak economic outlook. [REDACTED]

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/ 10 Somoza is making every effort to contend with the economic squeeze--soliciting loans from other Central American military regimes and the regional monetary fund, refinancing the debt with foreign commercial banks, requesting an IMF standby loan, and enacting strict domestic fiscal measures. These moves will buy time and perhaps bring some slight improvement over the next two years, but they will do no more than that so long as political disorder continues. Stemming that disorder is probably Somoza's reason for proposing reforms. As a secondary motive, Somoza probably hopes that such unilateral steps will open the door to rapprochement with the United States. [REDACTED]

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// / In another apparent move to ease tensions and improve the political climate, Somoza's son, Lieutenant Colonel "Tachito" Somoza--who spearheads the counter-insurgency campaign--plans to leave the country in September to attend a nine-month course at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. On the other hand, the course will embellish "Tachito's" military credentials and justify his continued rapid rise in the National Guard. As heir apparent of the dynasty, he will not be old enough to run for the presidency until 1986, but he is and will remain the focal point of opposition distrust of President Somoza's pledges of long-term democratization. [REDACTED]

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El Salvador: Heightened Tensions Increase Coup Threat

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Political tensions in El Salvador, which slackened momentarily in late February, are on the rise again with the renewal of terrorist attacks and leftist-inspired labor unrest. Although President Romero recently repealed the government's much-criticized public order law, he remains under pressure for tougher action from conservative businessmen and military hardliners. Further liberalizing measures in the near future would threaten his support in the military, where frustration and talk of a coup are growing. A step-up in counter-terrorist activity by the security forces seems almost inevitable if the situation continues to deteriorate.

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In mid-February, voices of political moderation began to be heard again for the first time since November. A leading spokesman for the wealthy elite issued a public appeal to conservatives to accept compromise and change. Three weeks later, a similar message, sponsored by the powerful National Association of Private Enterprise, appeared in local newspapers. Representatives of the opposition Christian Democratic Party, the business community, and labor unions continued preliminary discussions among themselves and with government representatives about the possibility of a political opening. President Romero later indicated that his vice president would meet in Caracas with the long exiled leader of the Christian Democrats. Usually outspoken Archbishop Romero restrained his criticism of the government, leading to speculation that a meeting might also take place between the Archbishop and President Romero. Most significant was the government's repeal on 27 February of the 15-month-old law on public order, which had given security forces broad powers of search and arrest, and had become a principal target of opposition critics.

These events, however, produced no change in the political situation. The repeal of the public order

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law, for example, is generally regarded as more of a gesture than a real concession. Indeed, it even provoked speculation that President Romero had acted not out of any desire to improve the political climate but in response to pressure from US diplomats or from leftist terrorists--who were rumored to have kidnaped the President's son. [redacted]

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Meanwhile, there has been a resurgence of violence over the past two weeks. In what may have been the beginning of a longer term assassination campaign, for example, the leftist Popular Liberation Forces murdered a low-level public official and a shoe-company executive. On the labor front, terrorist front groups appear to be successfully encouraging greater unrest. Striking workers recently occupied two factories in the capital and held hostages; at least 11 persons were killed and others injured in clashes between the strikers and security forces. [redacted]

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The increased violence has brought a strong reaction from conservatives who favor government repression. The wealthy Jewish community, in particular, has been venting its anger against Romero's policies since the kidnaping of the honorary Israeli consul general two months ago. [redacted]

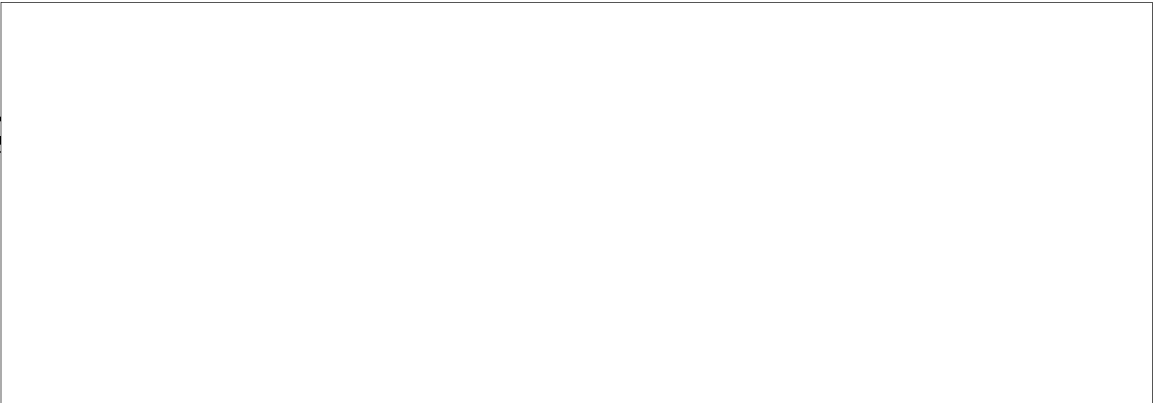
2,3,8
President Romero's relatively moderate--and so far ineffectual--response to the terrorism and labor unrest has led to a surge of speculation about a possible coup by ultraconservatives within the armed forces. Rumors have been especially rife during the past month. [redacted]

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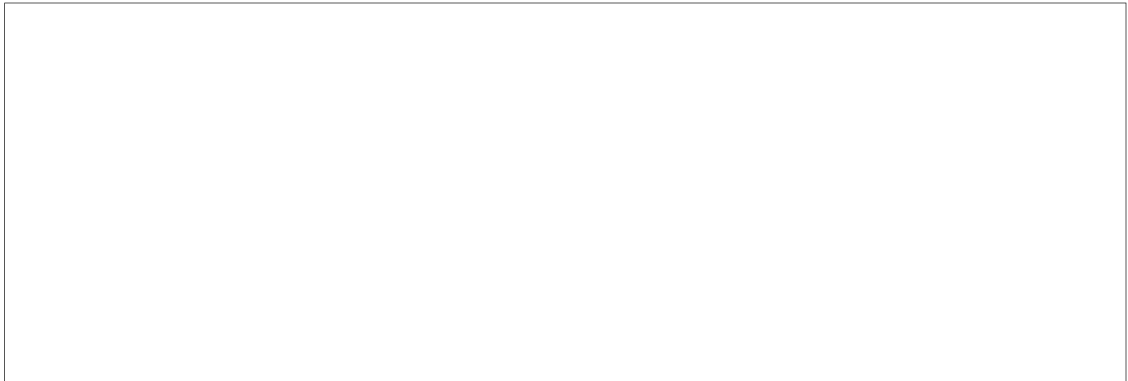


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President Romero, however, has already survived 20 months in office despite rising terrorism and increasing political polarization, and he may well ride out the present storm. His recent tour of the nation's military bases to explain his position is an effort to maintain his vital support in the armed forces. He has also attempted to demonstrate his government's resolve to fight terrorism by ordering security forces to carry out a large patrol and roadblock operation in the capital. In addition, the armed forces are planning major counter-guerrilla operations along the border with Honduras. Under the circumstances, any further liberalizing measures seem unlikely in the near future, and the outlook is for increased terrorist activity and counterviolence by security forces.



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Peru: Return to Civilian Rule Threatened by Haya's
Illness

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Plans of Peru's military government to return the country to civilian rule by 1980 face a serious challenge if reports are accurate that Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, a key figure in the transition process, has inoperable cancer. Reports on the subject are conflicting: while Haya told family members that doctors in Peru said he had terminal lung cancer, Haya's personal physician told the press that tests at a cancer clinic in the United States on Monday showed no indications of cancer. As head of APRA, the country's largest party, Haya has provided vital support to the military regime's democratization process, and he was expected to win the presidential elections planned for later this year. If Haya cannot stand for election, the military's continued commitment to restore civilian government may depend largely on APRA's ability to rally around another viable candidate who holds views acceptable to the military.

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Haya's Illness

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Haya has been ill for at least the past few months, but the nature and gravity of his illness remain unclear. In December, he was reported to have suffered a heart attack, and in February he was forced to withdraw from the Constituent Assembly and cancel the visit he traditionally makes to his hometown of Trujillo on his birthday. On 4 March, Haya called together members of his family to tell them he had terminal lung cancer, a condition he said had been confirmed after extensive tests. Although he expected to die soon, Haya said, he was going to the United States for treatment and would continue his work until his death. This had been the pattern throughout his illness; until very recently, the 84-year-old politician maintained his usual heavy round of duties as president of the Constituent Assembly and head of his party.

Haya arrived in the United States on 10 March and is now at a cancer research center in Houston. No public

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announcement about his illness has been made and APRA has made every effort to quash rumors. A continued desire to camouflage Haya's illness may explain the fact that his personal physician, Dr. Fernando Cabieses, who is currently with Haya, told the press that initial tests in Houston showed "no indication" of cancer. Dr. Cabieses said that Haya was suffering from "old age and fatigue."

[REDACTED]

Haya and the Retorno Process

4 Probably no man has been more essential than Haya de la Torre to the retorno process--Peru's transition to civilian government after 11 years of military rule. An old enmity existed between APRA and the Peruvian military, which had successfully contrived to keep APRA, the country's most popular party since Haya founded it in the 1920s, from gaining the presidency. Haya struck a bargain with President Morales Bermudez in the fall of 1977, ending this mutual antagonism and thus making it feasible for the military to carry forward the retorno process. Since that time, most military leaders have come to expect and favor the idea of transferring power to an APRA-led government. APRA, for its part, has supported the regime's approach to retorno--a staged arrangement involving the convocation of a Constituent Assembly last fall and plans for holding general elections for a civilian government as soon as the constitution is ratified. In firm control of his party, Haya has also provided support to the austerity program the government enacted in an effort to restore the economy and enable Peru to meet international credit obligations. For example, a major strike against new austerity measures scheduled during the past year have failed, partly due to the refusal of APRA-affiliated labor unions to participate in the strike.

[REDACTED]

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4 Haya's vital role in the transition period is further underscored by his work as president of the Constituent Assembly. Haya has worked skillfully to keep the assembly's attention focused on the drafting of the constitution, undercutting the efforts of leftists to turn the assembly into a forum for criticizing the military government. While nudging the assembly on toward its primary task, Haya has walked carefully to avoid charges that he was silencing dissent within the assembly.

[REDACTED]

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A similar adroitness has been required of Haya in maintaining unity among the diverse factions within his own party since its founding 55 years ago. Haya has provided the cement holding these factions together and enabling the party to adopt the realistic stance that was a prerequisite to reaching an accommodation with the military. It is difficult to imagine another APRA leader commanding such loyalty, especially since Haya has not groomed a successor, and thus some defections from the party may be expected once he is gone. Among the chief contenders for APRA leadership will be Armando Villanueva, a charismatic leader of the party's left wing; Andres Townsend, a respected leader but one whom many consider "too intellectual" and lacking in popular appeal; and Ramiro Priale, a power in APRA since its founding but who now may be too old to head the party.

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Prospects

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APRA has generally opposed forming an alliance with another party for the elections, assuming that Haya would draw the one-third plurality needed to win the presidency. If Haya cannot stand for election, APRA leaders will still be reluctant to share power and will make every effort to agree on another viable presidential candidate from among their own ranks, a man who commands the respect of the military. If this proves impossible, they might find an electoral alliance, possibly with the moderate Popular Christian Party, a preferable alternative to forgoing the return to civilian government or seeing power slip entirely from their hands.

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Venezuela: President Herrera's Cabinet



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President Luis Herrera Campin's recently announced cabinet is transitional and will be largely revamped following municipal elections scheduled for 3 June.

Most of the appointees are technocrats who were not prominent either in Herrera's political campaign or in his Social Christian Party. Two are close advisers of party founder and former President Rafael Caldera, but his still immense influence does not appear to have been reflected beyond these two appointments. As expected, Herrera named Humberto Calderon Berti as Minister of Energy and Mines, and Gonzalo Garcia Bustillos as his personal chief of staff, to head the Secretariat of the Presidency. Both men are longtime acquaintances of the new President and enjoy his confidence. Five members of the cabinet, as well as the newly appointed governor of Merida State, are graduates--along with Herrera--of the prestigious La Salle Catholic Secondary School in Lara State. This so-called "La Salle Group" forms an inner circle of advisers for Herrera, apart from his regular close associates within the Social Christian Party.

Herrera employed a deliberate pace in selecting his cabinet, conducting personal interviews with several score potential candidates and undertaking exhaustive consultations with party elders. This reflects the style that he will follow as President when making other important decisions.

Probably his most controversial appointment is that of Nerio Neri Mago to serve as Minister of State for the Development of the Eastern (Guyana) Region. Neri

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must cope with the economic development of the country's fastest growing area. Neri's appointment is all the more surprising in view of Herrera's promises to accord the Eastern Region a high priority in his administration's economic development plans.

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Herrera has yet to name a new head for the state petroleum company, his last remaining major appointment. The term of the present director, retired General Rafael Alfonso Ravard, expires in July. Nationalistic elements within the Social Christian Party are lobbying actively for a successor who will take a hard line with the multinational petroleum companies.



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